626 process of conflict regulation is ritually sanctioned and
182 the political order sacralized in a public way at the con-
771 clusion of litigation when the parties involved and the
'aqila read the Fatiha (the first sura of the Quran). For
671 the Bedouins, the 'awaiyid is the enactment of the word of
771 God, and the man who follows the 'awaiyid follows the command-
771 ments of God. One 'aqila speaking of the final authority which
•776 directs Bedouin society said this:
577

> God knows all things. God made the world and gave man a brain with which to think. Therefore, he gave man two choices: the good, and the bad. If a man follows the good, he does not steal, kill, or lie. God gave us Muhammad the Messenger, and he taught the ignorant to follow the word of God. You are an educated man, and so you must choose the good path and follow it. I do not read but I follow the Quran.

577 It follows, then, that "the good man" represents an
183 important Bedouin cultural ideal which is legitimated by
771 reference to the sacred. The practice of this ideal leads
[829] to "the good society." Another 'aqila, in reply to my question concerning the definition of a "good man," answered:

> A good man should follow God, and through this he will be a perfect man because such a man could make no mistakes. You could find no better person than this. The good man fasts, prays, makes the pilgrimage, and helps the poor. He avoids stealing and lying; these are the most important things to avoid . . . All men aim to do good. Some men think that they are doing good, but they cannot tell good from bad: this is the origin of badness . . . A man aims to do good so that the Arabs will thank him for it. The Arabs (i.e. the man's fellow Bedouins) will say that he is doing good and that he is following the good path.

121 external system, however, the law recognizes retaliation, a
681 life for a life. Still, even in this case, Bedouin values
682 expressed through the 'awaiyid try to avert bloodshed and
[182] feuding by showing "the good path" and providing the means
[671] for settlement through compensation.

Just as the Bedouin accepts the 'awaiyid as a set of
681 of ideals calculated to regulate conflict, he paradoxically
682 claims the right to impose retaliatory sanctions as a just
182 conclusion to conflict. One Bedouin said that the greatest
[671] sin which a man or group can commit is to accept the diiya
[673] and then take his blood-revenge and return the money. Presumably, a person or group commits no outrage if they refuse the diiya with the understanding that blood-revenge will be
[626] taken. In al-Qasr, retaliation and the 'awaiyid are mechanisms
[671] of social control and dispute settlement. A political office
* [613] exists, i.e. the 'aqila which functions over the total range
[672] of political action, and the process of adjudication and compensation in the form of indemnity payment represents an institutionalized alternative to retaliation. In all cases of dispute, ritual or religious sanctions back up social
• [776] sanctions. God is a third party to all conflict, and this is
[695] made manifest in the reading of the Fatiha or the oath-taking ceremony. In order to describe how authority and sanctions
128 operate in Bedouin society, a number of examples are presented
68 below. Some of the cases are the statements of informants about
[124]
[114]

685 627 798 695 [671] [776] The Geneishat selected the tomb of the saint where the oath was to be administered. According to the customary law of Awlad Ali, the plaintiff is the one to decide which saint is to be sought for the taking of the oath by the defendant. Each saint has his own reputation and some are said to be more effective in certain kinds of disputes. The saint selected in this case was Sidi Dmain. Sidi Dmian's tomb is in the Beheira province some 60 miles east of the area of Burg el-Arab. He is [732] [784] known to cause the blindness of those who dare to swear falsely by him, and at least four cases of blindness in the area have been attributed to [671] false oaths at Sidi Dmain. Also according to the law, it is the plaintiff who selects the persons from the defendant's kin unit who are to 685 627 695 support him in the oath. Following this rule, the Geneishat, with the help of Hadi, selected the fourteen men from bait Asabei to swear with Rabbu. The number of men that were required in this case was considered 613 very conservative. The usual practice in estimating the number of sup- [803] porters in any case is done by establishing the value of the damage or compensation and dividing it by ten. The result is the number of men needed to give the oath. If there were not enough adult males in a given kinship unit to fulfill the number needed, some or all the men would have to be sworn twice or three times and each time a person takes the oath he is considered as a separate person until the number needed is met.

Following this rule, and since the value of the property confiscated in the above case was over three thousand pounds, 300 persons should have been sworn in support of Rabbuh. Since this would have complicated the matter greatly, it was agreed that fifteen men were enough. Taieb gave the justification for limiting the number to 15 that trade and, as

685 such, deviates from the normal pattern of cases dealt with by the cus-
627 tomary law in the conventional way. The men selected by the Geneishat
695 included, in addition to Rabbu and his father Hakim, Shei'eb and his
613 three brothers, Hakim's cousin Samsoun and his four brothers and Hakim's uncle Sheikh Qudura and his sons. The date of the oath was set for June tenth. Two days before, the two parties involved in the dispute invited a number of the important people of other tribal segments in the area to [492] be witnesses to the oath. All involved started to travel to the tomb of [494] Sidi Dmain, some on donkeys, others by bus or train. At six o'clock on [497] the morning of the oath everybody gathered in the courtyard outside the [708] tomb of the saint. The granddaughter of the saint works as a mediator [787] between the spirit of her grandfather and his followers announced that [796] the saint was ready for the oath and everybody went inside preparing for the oath. Before the oath was taken the Geneishat asked Hakim if his son and the fourteen men they had chosen were present and Hakim said they were. Since the Geneishat were from a different tribal segment and lived outside the area, they had no personal knowledge of most of the men who were to take the oath. Knowing the reputation of Hakim they [212] asked the men to present their identification cards to check them against [747] the list they had. At that time Hakim said that some of the men didn't have identification cards because they had not applied for aid from the World Food Program. Then the Geneishat demanded that those without cards should be identified by members of other tribal segments who had come as witnesses. Hakim refused and then admitted that one of the men was absent and that he had put another in place of him. But when the Geneishat learned that the one to be absent was Sheikh Qudura, they insisted that

682 settlement is usually made after the parties have agreed to it,
627 yet, in certain instances where one of the parties later feels that
672 the settlement was not just or that he was coerced into accepting
695 it, he may ask for a second Mi'ad during which new procedures start in the case. In the present case, although Mahdi had originally accepted the judgment of the awaqil, as time passed and he realized that he was unable to pay the bloodmoney, he started to question the feasibility of the settlement. He discussed the matter
682 672 695 554 792 with Sheikh Suliman el-Gerery from the Murabiteen tribe of Gerera, a tribe whose members are feared throughout the area for the belief that they have certain supernatural powers. Sheikh Suliman himself
• [776] is highly respected, and people believe that after his death he will become "wali" or a saint. After hearing Mahdi's complaint, Sheikh Suliman told him that the settlement was unjust and told him that he would do something about it. The following Thursday, Sheikh Suliman called on Mahdi and asked him to bring his donkey and follow him. They rode to a small desert town called Bahig where the local market
613 517 571 443 576 is held every Thursday. On market day, the awaqil of various tribal segments usually gather in front of the general store in the town drinking tea and chatting until their sons or the younger members of their families sell the sheep and buy the necessary items. Everyone passing by the gathering is expected to greet the gathering, getting off his donkey as a sign of respect to the prominent people.
[689] Failure to greet a fellow tribesman is considered a serious offense liable to a fine of more than L. 50 and ten goats in certain cases.
[673] It is considered a very serious crime. One informant once told me,
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3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

8 ORIGIN AND EXPANSION OF THE SANUSIYA

The desire to establish in North Africa conditions in which Muslims might live by their own laws and under their own government, as they did in Arabia under the first four Caliphs, led the Grand Sanusi and his successors to oppose the Turkish way of life and the influences and innovations of Western Christendom, but their intransigence in these matters did not imply intolerance, far less aggressiveness. Though some writers have made assertions to the contrary, the Sanusi have never shown themselves more hostile than other Muslims to Christians and Jews, and the Grand Sanusi and Sayyid al-Mahdi scrupulously avoided all political entanglements which might bring them into unfriendly relations with neighbouring States and the European Powers. The Brothers of the Order were discouraged from discussing political questions. Nor were the Sanusi intolerant towards fellow Muslims who differed from them. Shaikh Muhammed 'Uthman records of Sayyid al-Mahdi that 'the persons he dislikes the most are those who speak ill of Muslims'.[1] The leaders of the Sanusiya have always tolerated other and rival Orders, even when they have disapproved of their rites. The Grand Sanusi had himself been a member of a succession of Orders before he started his own and he allowed, as his successors have done, members of other Orders to belong to the Sanusiya at the same time.

The leaders of the Order have also been tolerant towards the cult of saints, unlike the iconoclastic Wahhabi, who have destroyed even the tombs of those nearest to the Prophet himself. The view held by the doctors of orthodox Islam is that, though intercession through a saint is unlawful and the only mention of him during prayers at his tomb should be to ask the mercy of God on his soul, it is permissible to show respect to his tomb and his memory. The heads of the Sanusiya have, however, always tolerated among their Bedouin followers a regard for holy men and their tombs which goes beyond mere respect. It is unlikely that they felt any repugnance to the cult, because they counted among their forbears several saints and were themselves brought up in North Africa where the cult of saints is widespread and very near to the hearts of the common people; and they could not have remonstrated with the Bedouin for believing that holy men and their tombs are sources of *baraka*,

[1] Op. cit., p. 121.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

divine blessing, since it was because the Bedouin believed the Sanusi family had the same virtue that they accepted their leadership.

The resemblance often alleged between the Sanusi and the Wahhabi movements, on the grounds of like puritanism, literalism, and fanaticism, cannot be substantiated. It is obvious that there must be resemblances between new religious movements: they usually claim to be a return to primitive faith and morals and they are generally missionary and enthusiastic. There is no great significance in such common characteristics of the two movements. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the Grand Sanusi was directly influenced by Wahhabi propaganda. A more significant comparison between the two might be made by tracing their developments from religious into political movements. Both started as religious revivals among backward peoples, chiefly Bedouin, the Wahhabi movement in the Nadj in the eighteenth century and the Sanusi movement first in the Hijaz and then in Cyrenaica in the middle of the nineteenth century; the *Ikhwan* organizations of the two movements have much in common; and both ended in the formation of Amirates, or small Islamic States.

Both movements have created States, the Wahhabi in Arabia and the Sanusi in Cyrenaica, based explicitly on religious particularism. In doing so they have only done what any movement of the kind is bound to do in a barbarous country if it is to continue to exist, namely, to create an administrative system which would ensure a measure of peace, security, justice, and economic stability. A religious organization cannot exist apart from a polity of a wider kind. But they did not create the sentiment of community which made the growth of governmental functions and the emergence of a State possible.

Religious divisions in Islam have commonly been the expression of a sense of social and cultural exclusiveness. The support given to the 'Alids in Persia and Arabia, to the Umayyads in Africa and Spain, to the Fatimids in Egypt, to the Kharijites by the Berbers in North Africa, and the adoption of extreme Shi'ite doctrines by the mountaineers of Syria and by the Kurds, and of Isma'ili teachings in parts of India, were all reactions against foreign domination as much as revolts against orthodoxy. The religious deviation was the expression of the intense desire

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

of Cyrenaica.[1] The Bedouin remember with gratitude, as I have often heard them declare, the moral and cultural benefits brought to them by the Order. If they have fallen from the low religious and literary standards to which the Sanusiya raised a fraction of them it is due to the virtual extinction of its teaching office during their long struggle with the Italians.

II

The Bedouin the Grand Sanusi found in Cyrenaica were not only Muslims but also inveterate devotees of saints, the *Marabtin* (sing. *Marabat*) or Marabouts, as they are called in European accounts of North Africa, and the Grand Sanusi was in the long tradition of these holy men. Therefore, although I have touched on the matter in Chapter I, I need not excuse myself for treating it again in its Cyrenaican context, for Bedouin attachment to the Sanusiya springs from their personal devotion to the Grand Sanusi and his family, and not the other way round, and the Grand Sanusi derived his sanctity, and thereby his power, from the fact that he was a Marabout. The Bedouin are familiar with saints and ignorant of Orders. To them the Grand Sanusi was a saint and wonderworker, and a man with *baraka*, an ample measure of God's grace which flowed through him to ordinary folk; but there was nothing extraordinary about him. They knew his kind of old. When he died his tomb became a shrine, the largest and richest in Cyrenaica it is true, but only one among very many, dating from the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, through the Martyrs who were killed fighting for the faith in Cyrenaica, to the pious and learned men of yesterday and the day before. His successors, by their kinship with him, and in virtue of their spiritual legacy from him, became heirs to his *baraka*; and so, to a lesser degree, have the heirs of the other religious teachers who came to Cyrenaica from the west, who died and were buried there, and whose descendants are the *Marabtin bil baraka* lineages of to-day. The authority the Grand Sanusi had over the Bedouin of Arabia and North Africa can be paralleled by the careers of many holy

[1] Giuseppe Macaluso, *Turchi, Senussi e Italiani in Libia*, 1930, p. 32; Giglio, op. cit., p. 22; and Arcangelo Ghisleri (quoting Andrea Pedretti), *Tripolitania e Cirenaica dal Mediterraneo al Sahara*, 1912, p. 132.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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men in North Africa whose families still retain much wealth and influence. It was this Marabout status of the Grand Sanusi in the eyes of the Bedouin which won him their respect: it was the organization of the Sanusiya Order, an organization the earlier Marabouts did not have, which enabled him to turn this respect into a theocracy.

There is more than one explanation of the origin of the word '*Marabat*'. That generally accepted is that it derives from the root RBT, to bind, and hence from '*ribat*', a fortified convent, inhabited by warrior-monks, found on the marches of Islam in its early days of expansion by arms. The word later became attached to the tribes which settled in Andalousia under the leadership of the Saharan tribe of the Sanhaja and was corrupted into the European 'Almoravides'. After the fall of the Sanhaja dynasty in the twelfth century part of the *Marabtin* tribes fell back into central and southern Morocco, whence many individuals moved eastwards. Some settled in Cyrenaica, generally on their return from the pilgrimage to Mecca, and their fanaticism, asceticism, ability to read and write, and thaumaturgic powers, impressed the simple Bedouin, who accepted them as holy men and magicians and used them to write charms, to perform religious rites, and to act as mediators in inter-tribal disputes. Sometimes, as we have seen, these men founded lineages which, dwelling under the shadow of their saintly forbears, became nuclei of social agglomerations which have developed in course of time into tribal groups, thus taking the shape of the tribal society in which they lived. The word '*Marabtin*' thus came to mean holy men (and their tombs) and then, in addition, tribes tracing their descent, or supposed descent, from these holy men and also, finally, in Cyrenaica, tribes who are clients of the great *Sa'adi* tribes which own the earth and water.

Some of the better known of the Cyrenaican saints, but by no means all, have gleaming white cupolas, supported by four walls, erected over their tombs, and inside the walls is a *tub*, a wooden box, over the grave, and this is covered with coloured cloth on which are inscribed passages from the Koran. Inside also are often a few pages from sacred books, occasionally a few small coins given by the local Bedouin, and any property, such as tents or ploughs, the Bedouin have wished to deposit in a

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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safe place when on seasonal moves. Often a shrine, sometimes the shrine of a very famous saint, is no more than a wall of stones, with perhaps a stick, with pieces of cloth tied to it, erected over the grave, and this is the usual form in the steppe grazing-grounds. There are generally cemeteries around the tombs.

All these shrines are visited by the Bedouin from time to time, when they are passing by or when they have some request to make of the holy man. Many of them are cult centres, an annual ceremony, one of the chief events of the Bedouin year, being held at them; and when they are near the border between tribes, or between tribal sections, this is an occasion for intertribal, intersectional, gatherings. There is no saint whose tomb is much visited by the Bedouin who has not performed miracles, some of them very remarkable miracles, and there is probably none who has not at some time or other cured the sick or given an heir.

The tombs of these holy men, Sidi this, Sidi that, and Sidi the other, are found in profusion over the whole of inhabited Cyrenaica. The historically best known are those of Sidi Rafa', one of the Companions of the Prophet, near al-Zawiya al-Baida on the plateau, of Sidi 'Abdalla, one of the Prophet's standard-bearers, in the oasis of Aujila, and of the founder of the Sanusiya Order, Sidi Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Sanusi, at Jaghbub oasis. The shrines belong to the tribes and tribal sections in whose earth the Marabouts are buried and the Marabouts are looked upon as tribal and sub-tribal patrons. Like the Sanusiya Order, they have become part of tribal life.

I have earlier reproduced Col. De Agostini's map of the Hasa tribe to serve as an example of the territorial distribution of lineages. The same map serves to illustrate the distribution of shrines in a tribal territory. It can be seen from this map, which shows only the best-known Marabout tombs, that all the different sections of the tribe have their shrines, and I would draw attention to an interesting feature of the distribution which I have also noted in other tribal areas: how often these sacred spots are near a tribal boundary, or near the boundary between one tribal section and another. This may not be pure chance, for the Marabouts in their lifetimes were regarded as standing outside the tribal system, to which indeed, being foreigners from the west, they did not belong, and their chief political role was

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
(1837-1942) Sanusi

778 619 792 776 to act as mediators between tribes and between one tribal section and another. Even to-day their tombs are regarded as neutral points, as it were, and are often the place chosen for a meeting between the Shaikhs of one tribe, or tribal section, and those of an adjacent tribe, or section, when some matter has to be settled between them. It has sometimes happened also that when two tribes have disputed the ownership of territory, they have settled the dispute by allotting it to a Marabout, which means to his descendants, so that one then finds a *Marabtin* strip between two *Sa'adi* tribes or tribal sections. One of the best examples of this is the strip of country owned by the Aulad al-Shaikh tribe between the 'Awaqir and the 'Abid and 'Arafa tribal domains. In the same way tribes made gifts of disputed wells to dead saints. Where a *Marabtin* tribe has grown out of a Marabout family they will be found living in the area around their tombs. Thus the Aulad al-Shaikh territory spreads out from Sidi Mahiyus, part of the Masamir live near Sidi Nuh, the Mshaitat live around Sidi al-Mshaiti, and the Qat'an live near Sidi Hashim and Sidi Suliman al-Tair.

792 776 212 554 So, long centuries before the Grand Sanusi began his mission in Cyrenaica, the Bedouin were used to the sight of an *'alim*, a learned man—for anyone who can read and write is a learned man to the Bedouin—coming from the west to heal their children and beasts, break droughts, write talismans, and teach them the beliefs and law of Islam. Such a man was also a *muhakkam*, one who arbitrated in their disputes and said the *fatiha* at their settlements and undertakings to make them binding. He could arbitrate among them because he was not of them. He was not like them a tented son of the steppe, though his descendants may have learned to live as such, but a *Marabat*, a man who follows religion and not the rains. The Bedouin of Cyrenaica owe much to these holy men, for, ignorant and superstitious though they may have been, they taught the tribesmen to respect learning and religion and kept those twin lights burning, even if dimly, through centuries. The Bedouin do not forget them, or to say a prayer for them, when they pass their tombs; and they have given the freedom of their earth and water to their descendants. Without these forerunners the [182] Grand Sanusi could not have planted his Order in the country. [795] It is planted in their bones.

3:Evans-Pritchard E-4, 5 (1942-1944) 1949 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
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find hereditary transmission of Shaikhship of lodges most accentuated, such as the Bara'asa-Tamia section (al-Zawiya al-Baida), the 'Awaqir-Sdaidi section (Msus zawiya), and the 'Abaidat-Ghaith section (Tart zawiya). In the same way the earlier Marabouts became, as has been noted, founders of lineages which were on the pattern of the branches of the Bedouin clans among whom they lived, and attached to them.

Also it must be remembered that the lodges were tribal institutions built by the local Bedouin so that they might participate in the *baraka* of Sayyid Muhammad bin 'Ali al-Sanusi. They participated in it through the Shaikhs of their zawiyas who received their *baraka* direct from the hands of the Grand Sanusi himself, or from the hands of son Sayyid al-Mahdi, and passed it on to their sons. This *baraka* belonged to the tribe, or tribal section, which built a lodge just as the *shaukha*, the secular Shaikhship of the tribe, or tribal section, belonged to it and had to be kept in it. In both the continuity of family succession had to be maintained, unless there were good reasons for acting otherwise. Thus each tribal section emphasized its autonomy in its hereditary line of religious Shaikhs, through whom the *baraka* of the founder of the Order was transmitted to them, whilst proclaiming its membership of a tribal federation with common allegiance to the Head of the Order.

As I have pointed out when speaking of the sacred *Marabtin* tribes of Cyrenaica, it was customary for the descendants of a Marabout to reside near his tomb. I have further mentioned that the Shaikh of a Sanusiya lodge, who is also called a *Marabat* by the Bedouin, might, if he had during life a reputation for piety, rather easily gained in Islam, be venerated as a saint when he was dead and his tomb become a shrine. This is another reason why Shaikhly families have tended to become hereditary directors of lodges.

Just as almost all the Marabouts of Cyrenaica were foreigners from the west, so were almost all the Shaikhs of the Sanusiya lodges. The Dardafi and Isma'ili families came from Tripolitania, the Ghumari family from Morocco, the 'Ammur, Bu Jibali, and Khattab families came from Algeria, and so on. As a class they enjoyed, and still enjoy, a reputation for sanctity among the Bedouin on account of their knowledge of the Koran

4: Peters E-5 (1948-1950) 1970 MT9 Libyan Bedouin MT9
Cyrenaica

days on which kin of various sorts should attend the mourning ceremonies, which extend over a period of a week. Allowance is made for those who may be away temporarily, although they are expected to hasten to the mourning camp as quickly as possible. Agnatic kin are expected not only to be present on the appropriate day, but are required to offer gifts consistent with their relationship to the bereaved; agnates of the tertiary segment are expected to offer a sheep, while some cognates ought to bring a goat and others a quantity of sugar and tea. At one funeral in a camp where I was resident, soon after the death occurred, the main concern of its inhabitants was whether or not certain men of their section would attend the mourning rites and bring appropriate gifts with them. These men lived at the time in another camp a few miles away, as they had been doing for several years past. They did not come when they were expected, and when they finally arrived at the end of the week they brought with them gifts of sugar and tea only—gifts which were totally inappropriate for agnates of the group. They were, in fact, now no longer members of it, and my neighbours were able to tell me, 'They have branched off from us. We will never live together again.' The lineage had proliferated and this was the first occasion for showing it.

Wide-spread in Cyrenaica is a cult of saints. The number of saints' tombs varies from tribe to tribe, there being fewer among the camel herders of the semi-desert than among the cow-herding, almost sedentary, folk of the plateau area. Whatever the number, the members of the group that venerates a particular saint make an annual pilgrimage to his tomb, and sometimes more frequent pilgrimages are made. In one area there were two men, accepted by their respective kin groups as leaders, who vied against each other for the leadership of their section. One of them had been a famous warrior during the Italian wars and, after being injured, fled to Egypt where he lived for seventeen years, until he returned to his homeland in 1947. The other had also fought against the Italians, failed to win renown, was a captive for a time, later released, and subsequently appointed leader of his section by the Italian authorities. The first, during his period of exile, had become impoverished. The second during his years of freedom had prospered. As far as their personalities